

Army Modernization In Sync With JFCOM, CJCS Visions

By Ann Roosevelt, Defense Daily, 2 Jul 09

The Army is working collaboratively and in sync with U.S. Joint Forces Command (JFCOM) and the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) as it revises its modernization strategy and seeks to restore balance in the force.

"Here's the challenge," Lt. Gen. Stephen Speakes, deputy chief of staff, G-8, said yesterday. "When you talk about balance, our focus in balance is to try to take the Army as it is been designed, resourced and structured and enable it to meet the [combatant commanders'] COCOM demand. When we're looking at balance, the first issue we look at is trying to put individual and unit soldier rotations in a manageable, tolerable basis."

Earlier this week, Speakes was at Ft. Hood, Texas, where the whole focus of the soldiers and leaders he spoke to was to try and manage the "incredible strain on the human beings involved" in two wars and global demands. This has been a high priority for Army leadership.

The Army focus is to align supply and demand and meet the need for more brigades and brigades with different and more sophisticated capability.

At the same time, as part of the joint force, the service is working with JFCOM and JCS, which have produced a vision of the future--JFCOM's Joint Operating Environment document and the Capstone Concept for Joint Operations from JCS Chairman Adm. Mike Mullen.

"Our answer is yes," Speakes said. The service is working with the visions expressed in those documents as it shapes its modernization plans with the reorganization of the Future Combat System, the end of the manned ground vehicle portion of the program, determining requirements for a new ground combat vehicle and where Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles fit in the future--all issues of interest to Defense Department leadership and Congress.

"In fact, I think you'll find that many of the terms and themes that are in the Joint Operating Environment really have their origins in Army leaders' expressions of what it is we see," he said. "We're a part of a collaborative process--Gen. Casey, for example, has been very, very vigorous in his thinking and development of what it is we're dealing with today and what we're going to look like in the future."

For example, the term 'persistent conflict' is something the Army has been using all of Casey's tenure as the chief of staff.

"It does reflect the need for a cyclic readiness for enduring capabilities and so we think we're very well aligned both with the joint view of what it is and also with the COCOMs who need these capabilities the most," Speakes said.

The Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) has taken up a question on Army structures as part of the joint contribution to the needs of the operating environment.

"The specific question is, if you're doing train, advise, assist, do you need a specialized unit that does that and that alone," Speakes said.

The Army view has been that it is trying to develop a multi-purpose organization at the core and that the organization with tailoring in terms of its organizational structure, equipment, and training will be able to function across the spectrum of conflict.

"This is something we're discussing in the QDR," Speakes said. "We are making our views known. We will see what the leadership of the Department of Defense decides. This is all pre-decisional at this point."